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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [UN](#) [EC](#)
SUBJECT: GOE'S UNGA PRINCIPALS: EXPERIENCED PERMREP,
DISTRACTED PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: A. REF A: STATE 127917
[1](#)B. REF B: 05 QUITO 2193
[1](#)C. REF C: 05 QUITO 1926
[1](#)D. REF D: QUITO 2262
[1](#)E. REF E: 92 QUITO 801

Classified By: PolOff Erik Martini for reasons 1.4 (B&D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: This report on the GOE's UNGA principals responds to questions posed by the Department in Ref A. The GOE has an experienced and capable UN PermRep in Diego Cordovez. Relations between President Alfredo Palacio and FM Francisco Carrion are generally close, but include tensions born of the FM's frustration dealing with the temperamental, erratic president and differences over the recent exit from the Cabinet of former Defense Minister Jarrin. End Summary.

Carrion-Palacio: Growing Friction as Time Runs Out

[1](#)2. (C) We have provided extensive previous biographic reporting on Foreign Minister Carrion (see refs B, C and D).

[1](#)3. (C) The relationship between Carrion and his President has generally been good. There is evidence of some recent friction between Carrion and Palacio: Carrion confessed to the Ambassador recently that he sometimes finds dealing with Palacio to be difficult and frustrating. Carrion's remarks came after the sudden and unexpected resignation of Oswaldo Jarrin as MinDef. Jarrin and Carrion were close Cabinet allies and friends. In New York, both Carrion and Palacio will be looking beyond the end of the Palacio administration on January 15, 2007. Although Carrion decided not to seek to lead the Community of Andean Nations, he has strong ties to front-running presidential candidate Leon Roldos and could conceivably stay on as foreign minister should Roldos win. If not, he would likely gain one of Ecuador's premier ambassadorial positions. Palacio, meanwhile, is campaigning to be the next Director General of the World Health Organization.

Cordovez Brings Experience as PermRep

[1](#)4. (U) Ambassador Diego Cordovez Zegers, Ecuador's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, began his diplomatic career in 1958 and joined the United Nations in 1963. He quickly rose through the ranks of the UN, serving as Under

Secretary General for Special Political Affairs from 1981-88.

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During that time, he was involved in mediating the Iran-Iraq war and brokering the Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan, among other high profile tasks. He has written a book on his experiences in Afghanistan.

¶5. (C) From 1988-92, Cordovez served as Foreign Minister under President Rodrigo Borja. He was resented then by some career MFA diplomats, embarking on reforms in the MFA that emphasized modernization and multi-lateral affairs. He also reformed the promotion system. Complaints focused on Cordovez' aloofness--including his efforts to install a personal elevator in the MFA and ignoring lower ranking Ecuadorian diplomats. On foreign policy, Cordovez was viewed as somewhat pro-U.S. but eloquently able to criticize USG policies when expedient.

¶6. (C) After serving in the Borja administration, Cordovez pushed to become UN Secretary General, but his candidacy did not get off the ground. He briefly joined the international lawfirm LeBoef, Lamb, Greene and McRae in New York and was then nominated as the vice-presidential candidate on the losing Social Christian Party (PSC) ticket headed by Jaime Nebot in 1996. He stayed on at the United Nations as Special Advisor to the Secretary General where he traveled to Cyprus as a mediator in 1997 and 1999 and traveled as an observer to Venezuela during the referendum on Chavez' presidency in ¶2004. His public comments in Venezuela lamented the polarization of society and the lack of a system to confront political problems and poverty.

¶7. (C) In recent years, Cordovez increased his work on behalf of the GOE. Although still acting as Special Political Advisor to the UN Secretary General, in 2005 E Cordovez worked with the Ecuadorian Free Trade Agreement negotiating team to lobby Senators, Members of Congress and other USG officials. When the Gutierrez government fell in April of 2005, Alfredo Palacio tapped Cordovez to be part of a four member team to advocate for his legitimacy as President before the OAS and the USG. In August 2005, Palacio told the Ambassador that he would replace FM Parra Gil with Cordovez (Ref C). Ultimately, in late September of 2005, Carrion replaced Parra Gil, and Palacio named GOE UN PermRep Luis Gallegos as the GOE's Ambassador to the U.S. and appointed Cordovez to the PermRep position.

¶8. (C) Cordovez has spent nearly half of his career and life in New York. He has been described as brilliant, ambitious and vain. Ref E reported Cordovez "likes whisky, cigars and flirting - not necessarily in that order." A recent magazine profiled his love of wine, especially a bottle of Haut Brion Premier Grand Cru Classe 1976 given to him by Saddam Hussein twenty years ago. When running for vice president he told the press he liked to surround himself with women as he believed they are hard-working and less distracting than men; in the UN 75 per cent of his staff were women.

¶9. (U) Cordovez is 71 years old - his birthday is 20 September. Born in Quito, he graduated from an elite private school, Colegio Americano, and the military academy of Ecuador. He obtained his law degree from the University of Chile. His wife, Maria Teresa Somavia, is from Chile and they have one son, Diego, who is an AmCit and lives in New York. He is the cousin of former First Lady Eugenia Febres Cordero. Cordovez speaks English fluently.

¶10. (C) Comment: Recent tension could signal some growing separation between the President and Foreign Minister, although Carrion is a loyal career diplomat and will faithfully carry out Palacio's policies. Palacio will likely enlist Cordovez' talents and NY contacts in his effort to win the WHO position.

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